

RECREATION ELEMENT

401. The Recreation Element provides guidelines for meeting the recreational needs of the Town. In the most comprehensive sense, recreation starts within the home and extends through community facilities and onto wider areas. This recreation element is concerned with lands within the Los Altos Hills Planning Area that can provide recreation opportunities for use and enjoyment by residents.

402. The recreation areas proposed include open space preserves, open space conservation areas, public and private recreation areas and trails and paths. Most of these areas are dealt with in the open space element or the trails and paths element. The focus in this element will be on the role these areas should play in filling the overall recreational needs of the Town.

403. A recreation element for local General Plans is required by the State Subdivision Map Act, if cities are to avail themselves of Section 11546 of the Act. Section 11546 permits the local jurisdiction to require subdivisions to dedicate land for park and recreation purposes. The Element is required to set forth definite principles and standards upon which dedication requirements are based. Objectives:

404. To provide recreation areas adequate to meet neighborhood and community needs of the Town.

Principles:

1. Open space preserves should provide a variety of scale, from macro to micro. (See definitions in Open Space Element). These should provide informal recreation, such as hiking, riding and free play as well as visual pleasure.
2. Recreation activities requiring organized and developed spaces should be accommodated at public recreation areas and school sites.
3. Public recreation areas should be specifically adapted to local needs and interests.
4. Private recreation areas should supply specialized recreation facilities not deemed a Town responsibility.

5. Trails and paths should constitute a major recreation facility in the Town and should link all recreation areas.
6. New residential subdivisions should provide open space for recreation to fill their appropriate share of the local recreational needs.
7. Park and recreation areas should be utilized, and uses controlled so as to not adversely effect the surrounding residential areas.
8. Residents of Los Altos Hills accord the highest value to the Town's open space and recreation areas. These areas, many of which are owned by the Town itself, help supply and preserve the unique character and semi-rural atmosphere of Los Altos Hills, provide important balance to the more densely urbanized San Francisco Bay plain, and provide numerous recreational, scenic, open space, and conservation resources and opportunities for the Town and its residents.

Accordingly, the lands owned by the Town of Los Altos Hills commonly known as Byrne Preserve, Central Drive, Juan Prado Mesa Preserve, O'Keefe Property, Rhus Ridge Properties, Murietta Ridge, Little League Fields on Purissima Road, Westwind Community Barn, and Edith Park shall not be conveyed, sold or abandoned in whole or in part for any purpose, except pursuant to a vote of the Town electorate; provided, however, that this paragraph shall not require a vote of the electorate for any conveyance by the City of a leasehold, easement, or other property interest in these lands for a use consistent with the property's General Plan designation.

405. Standards:

1. All residential areas should have public land available for recreation within approximately one-half to one mile distances.
2. The requirement of #1 above may be met by open space preserve land in public ownership and public recreation areas.
3. The acreage of public land available for recreation shall be not less than five percent of the residential area of the Town. Each numbered

405.3.(cont.) residential area described in the land use element shall meet this requirement.

Description:

406. Each of the categories of land use shown on the General Plan Diagram which have recreation significance are described below as they relate to recreation use.

1. Open Space Preserve. Also see description of open space preserve in the open space element. The large mountain open space preserve (south of Moody Road) to the extent it is developed for public or private recreation, will help meet the recreation needs of the Town. This vast area is also suitable for meeting certain recreation needs of the mid-peninsula, which are of a lower intensity nature, can be accommodated on available roads, and do not adversely effect neighboring properties.

Byrne Park Preserve is a Town-owned open space which should be kept entirely in its natural state. It is suitable for activities such as hiking, riding, grazing and nature study.

The open space preserve at Fremont and Concepcion Roads may take on a recreation use if it is developed for Town purposes as described in the land use element.

The Neary Quarry is shown as an open space preserve. It is doubtful that this site will ever be suitable for any use other than open space.

Enhancement of the site as an open space preserve will be needed.

2. Open Space Conservation Areas. Also see description of open space conservation areas in the open space element. The open space conservation areas are by and large the open portions of lands which have some other primary use. Thus, those portions of residential lots which are parts of major natural features such as creeks or canyons are shown in this category. Also, portions of public school sites and other institutions which are in open space are so indicated. A designation as an open space conservation area does not necessarily imply any public right of entry which is not otherwise permitted by the primary use. It is recommended, however, that in un-subdivided areas, open space conservation areas be

406.2(cont.) committed to public ownership where possible and desirable. One such example is the public ownership along Adobe Creek in the Rhus Ridge Ranchos subdivision.

3. Recreation Area -Public. Most small-scale recreation areas for daily recreation needs of adults and children are supplied on residents' own lots, in the form of yards, play equipment, swimming pools, riding facilities, and, in some instances, tennis courts. Large-scale recreation areas, however, must be provided at public: recreation areas and school sites. Town-owned recreation facilities include the Little League Fields on Purissima Road. The three elementary schools and college site provide a vital supplement to the Little League Field. Town-owned public recreation facilities also include the Westwind Community Barn, a historic 24,000 square foot, “U” shaped barn on Altamont Road. The Community Barn and its approximately 15 acres of surrounding land were acquired by the Town in 1975 from the Hungarian Countess Margit Bessenyey, and provide boarding, riding, and equestrian events to residents, non-residents, and handicapped children. The Barn and its adjacent facilities currently house the Westwind 4-H Riding for the Handicapped program, the Pacifica Ridge Chapter of the United States Pony Club, and Town of Los Altos Hills recreation programs. Town-owned public recreation facilities also include Edith Park, a “gateway” to Los Altos Hills located at Edith and Fremont Roads along Adobe Creek. The park features a meandering path through a wooded setting and a plaque commemorating the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and is used as a route by children to Bullis-Purissima Elementary School.
4. Recreation Area -Private. Private recreation facilities are very significant land uses in the planning area. The Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country Club and the Los Altos Country Club supply not only needed golfing facilities, but also provide large, attractive open spaces.

406.4.(cont.) The Fremont Hills Country Club provides for a range of activities, including swimming, tennis and riding. The use is well located and serves a community need. Periodic review is needed to assure continued compatibility with surrounding land uses. The Adobe Creek Lodge complex is a non-conforming use under the zoning regulations. The restaurant, picnic and country club activities attract many people from outside the Town and result in extreme traffic congestion on Moody Road at times. This use should be revised to meet the requirements of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The site is basically suited to recreation or residential use. The Foothill Tennis and Swimming Club and the University Club of Palo Alto on Miranda Avenue (Palo Alto) in the northern portion of the planning area provide needed recreational facilities and their continuation is deemed desirable.

The boarding stables provide another important private re-creation facility. The provision of stabling facilities on sites large enough to provide for necessary buildings, and corrals and pastures is desirable. Also, such sites should be located so as not to impinge upon residential and other non-equestrian facilities. Ideally, these facilities can be located next to open space preserves or could in fact be permitted on privately owned lands within open space preserves existing stables meeting these criteria are shown on the Plan Diagram.

5. Historical Sites. Historical sites can provide a significant recreation and education resource. These sites are described in the open space element and are therefore not described further here.
6. Institutional. Virtually all of the institutional uses provide for some forms of public or private recreation. Of greatest importance are the recreation facilities at public schools. The degree of importance of the public schools in supplying recreation should be further determined to better allow the Town to react to various school district proposals for closing schools. The Town may have to step in to see that such facilities are continued or replaced.